

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.924
A8F22
Cop 2

May 1, 1946



Help American Farmers Save the World from Starvation

Fact Sheet : 1946 FARM LABOR PROGRAM

EXTENSION SERVICE,
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The May 1 Situation

In many parts of the nation, 1946 calls for a more intensive domestic farm labor recruiting campaign than in 1945 or any other war year, if the accelerated national food production and harvesting job is to be done...if the cry for food from starving millions is to be answered...and if the food supply of our own people is to be protected.

Months ago it was indicated that the 1946 situation would become increasingly difficult because of adjustments necessitated in shifting the farm labor program from three years of wartime operation to a peacetime level. Now, it has been further complicated by the step-ups in farm production goals resulting from a world-wide shortage of food. Our crop acreage goals now call for 14 million more acres than were planted in 1945. From its role as the "arsenal of democracy" the United States now finds itself cast as the "bread-basket of the world."

It's a Job for Our Own People to Do

Adjustments from war to peacetime agriculture have created many new problems. In farm labor it involves the necessity of shifting from some of the sources from which farm workers were drawn during war years. This means shifting from such sources as imported foreign workers and prisoners of war, and shifting to home folks. This latter group includes the returning war veterans and the men who were employed in war industries and who have become idle through reconversion and curtailments in operations; men who want to change jobs, migratory laborers, and others who move across state lines.

Gaps in 1945 Farm Labor Force

There are disturbing gaps in the labor force which did a near record farm production and harvesting job in 1945. As of April 1, 1946, the number of family workers - farm operators and unpaid members of their families - was 2 percent greater than on April 1, 1945. The number of hired workers was slightly less than a year earlier. It is in this "hired worker" classification that gains must be made through year-round and seasonal employment to offset the withdrawal of the last of the prisoners of war from agriculture, effective June 15, 1946, and a 15 to 20 percent reduction, in the number of foreign workers who

will be imported this year. In these foreign worker and prisoner groups alone there is a loss of 140,000 6-day-a-week workers. In 1945, in the Extension farm labor program, 7,521,225 placements were made, compared with 6,127,446 in 1944. During the first two months of 1946, farm labor placements total 216,950 compared with 293,234 during the same two months of 1945.

More Difficult Than '45 in Some Areas

National data give only a part of the picture. The 1946 farm labor situation will be even more difficult than that in 1945 in some areas. In others it will be less difficult. With increased goals for crops such as wheat and sugar beets, areas producing these crops will need more workers than ever before. Even more intensive local recruitment than in the past will be needed in cotton, peanut and vegetable producing areas that used prisoners of war in 1945. Some fruit producing areas will have much larger crops in 1946 than in 1945 and will need more workers. Other fruit areas will have smaller crops and smaller labor requirements than last year. Specialized fruit and vegetable producing areas, cotton areas, potato areas, hybrid seed corn areas and other similar areas will need large numbers of extra workers during periods of peak labor requirements, although in some cases the need may not be any larger or may be slightly less than during the war. Areas of this type will need large numbers of "extra" workers as long as they continue to produce these specialized crops. Considerable improvement in labor supply is becoming evident in most general farming areas but this does not solve the "problem" in specialized areas.

Some Favorable, But "Ify" Straws

There are some favorable straws along the farm labor supply line, but most of them are still of a very "ify" character...not definite enough yet to warrant dependence as a reliable source for the workers who will be needed. For example, the return of war veterans to the farms is expected to be an important factor in easing the demand for year-round workers, but to date the flow of these men back to the farms is much slower and lighter than had been expected. Before July 1, 1945, about 1,650,000 had left the farms to enter the armed services. Many more have gone since then, and currently others are being taken. During all of 1945 and the first two months of 1946, only 44,692 returned servicemen were placed on farms as hired men or tenants, by 9,000 Extension farm labor offices. It is known that many more have returned to farm work at family farms, to friends' farms, to former farm jobs, without contacting farm employment offices. Currently a Bureau of Census report shows 650,000 servicemen have returned to the farms. This is an estimate, based on a spot survey made at 25,000 farm families throughout the U. S., and is based on answers to the question: "How many returned war veterans are spending a major part of their time on your farm?" The answers do not indicate that all of the number reported are working full, part or any time on that farm.

Currently there are reports from the states - largely west of the Mississippi, and particularly on the West coast - indicating that the returning veterans who had opportunities in several lines of activity, have settled down to seriously making a decision, and are giving more consideration to returning to farming. Currently about 1,758,000 World War II veterans are drawing adjustment compensation.

The situation surrounding the return of farm workers who went into the war industries, is along much the same lines. Some of them are among the 1,605,000 who are now drawing unemployment compensation. When they go back to work, current step-ups in industrial wages will be an important factor in keeping some of them, and some of the returning veterans, too, from resuming farm work. There has been a very high percentage increase in farm wages (262% in the 1939-1946 period) as compared with increases in farm prices (109% in the same period). Farm wages have risen about 2% since January 1, 1946, and 6% since April 1, 1945, but the hourly rates are still below industrial wage rates. If industrial operations are in "high", when the harvest peaks come in August and September, the flow of returning servicemen and the idle war plant workers to the farms is not likely to be heavy.

Just now, the total number of war veterans and war plant workers who have returned to the farms, no more than offsets the number of 1945 farm operators and workers who have left the farms. These departures include many aged men and women who are no longer able to carry on, young people who have withdrawn to go to school, youth who have been taken in selective service, and wartime hired men who have returned to industry or other nonfarm jobs.

Sure-Fire Sources Must be Tapped

Because of all of these "ify" conditions, and the knowledge that a farm labor force larger than that in 1945, must be recruited in 1946, it becomes necessary to turn to sources of supply that can yield the needed number of workers. It all shakes down to the recruitment of men, women and youth in towns and cities near the areas of need. This means local mobilization campaigns, more intense than ever before, to get the maximum number of full and part-time, vacation and other workers, as well as those who can spend weekends and days away from regular employment.

When local and other intrastate sources have been exhausted, efforts will be centered in obtaining the help of migratory workers and others who can be moved across state lines through the efforts of farmers, the workers themselves and the Extension farm labor program. After that, as the last resort there will be the foreign workers, if additional help is needed. These imported workers will be utilized this year in "flying squadrons" shifted to meet critical conditions where there is danger of crop losses. The diminishing number of these foreign workers closely restricts their use to "critical" periods in the "critical" areas.

How Local Recruitment is Set Up

The general recruiting program is along the same lines as in the war years, except that the over-all designation, "U. S. Crop Corps", is not being used, and the Women's Land Army has been de-activated. There will be just as great a need for the help of women as there has ever been before, but they will be recruited in the general program rather than as a separate unit. The youth program - Victory Farm Volunteers - is continued on the same basis as in other years. The responsibility for recruitment is upon the state farm labor supervisor in the states and upon the county agricultural agent in the counties and their communities.

Appeals in Recruiting Local Workers

In local mobilization, the emphasis in appeal - under May 1 conditions - can be applied in this manner:

1. A close tie-in with the world famine emergency food campaign, with "Help American (or any state or local name) Farmers Save the World From Starvation" as the theme song or slogan.
2. The economic importance to the local community of getting the crops produced and harvested.
3. Building healthy bodies through a summer of outdoor work in the open country, with opportunities for work to pay all expenses and leave a "take-home" balance.
4. The educational and work experience values in farm work for youth from towns and cities (VFW program).

Strong support for the "world famine emergency" appeal will be found day and night in the material that is flowing through newspaper, radio, movie, magazine, advertising and other channels; in the daily experiences housewives are having at their food supply centers; in the reestablishment of rationing and quotas. In this one appeal there are all the tools and ammunition needed to get the farm labor recruiting job done, and prevent any crop losses, except through the influence of weather.

Support for the Appeal

Information support for the farm labor program - news and radio - will flow out of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and Extension Service offices in Washington, the State extension farm labor offices and land grant colleges in the states, and the county agent and farm labor offices in the counties and communities.

The national radio networks program has been set up along much the same general lines as in other years, with one important change. It will not be a recruiting program. The responsibility for initiating and developing the recruiting program rests upon the states, counties and communities. The national radio networks program will be sharply limited to "conditioning" the public for the state and county sponsored recruiting campaigns. The networks program will keep the public currently informed on general conditions. The state and locally sponsored recruiting program will tell workers when, where and how many are needed, what jobs are to be done and where they are, and if the need is for full or part-time workers, or for men, women or youth.

Sources of Information

National and local advertising agencies and advertisers, newspaper publishers, radio stations and any others who want to help, are requested to support the campaign through all channels of information including news stories, broadcasts, articles, illustrated features, pictures, advertising, etc. Some advertisers will want to use separate ads and others will prefer to use "drop in"

copy, in regular advertising. Industrialists and other business men will help through trade and professional publications and house organs. Individuals or organizations desiring to contribute any of this type of support can obtain reliable and up-to-the-minute information from these sources:

1. At national level: Extension Farm Labor Program office, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C. (Farm labor information office, Rm. 6405 So. Bldg; Telephone - Republic 4142, Ext. 4984).
2. State level: State farm labor and Extension Service offices, State land grant colleges.
3. County and community level: Office of county agricultural agent.

Information for Recruits

Those who have a summer to contribute in farm work, should contact the county agricultural agent or the farm labor office. The county agent is usually located at the county seat. In cities where there is no county agent office, information generally is available at farm labor or other public employment offices, including United States Employment Offices.

Those who have less than an entire season, or only part-time, to devote to farm work, should stand by for the local call for workers in their towns, cities and counties. This call will be made through newspaper, radio and other avenues of communication.

Those who are seeking year-round farm work, whether experienced or inexperienced in this work, should contact the county agricultural agent, or the farm labor office. One or both will be found in most counties. Where neither is located, a public employment office, like USES, generally has information. There are openings for year-round workers in almost all farming areas.

Prevailing Wages and Rates

While the recruiting is on a voluntary basis, it does not carry the contribution of time and effort without financial return. Prevailing wage and piece-work rates are paid to all who work. These rates vary from state to state, and community to community.

Information Materials

At the Federal extension office in Washington, printed and duplicated materials in support of the farm labor program, have been prepared for use in the states. Copies are available at the county agent, farm labor and state farm labor offices or at the Office of Information, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C. These materials include:

Posters: "You're Needed Again", general recruiting, 2 colors
"We're Needed Again", VFV recruiting, 4 colors
"Our School is Cooperating", VFV cooperation, 2 colors
Directional arrow signs for farm labor offices, 2 colors

Folders: "Youth Learns and Earns", VFV addressed to school men and parents
"Youth Can Help", VFV addressed to farmers and county agents
"Your Job as a Work Leader", VFV and adults

"Why, What, When, How", outline of information program, 14 pages

Current Fact Sheets, issued as conditions change .

Membership Cards, VFV

Recognition Certificates, 2 color, for general use as awards in recognizing
contribution of adults and youth and organizations

Radio Helps, 4 page mimeographed publication to aid recruiting

Harvest Maps: East coast migratory, wheat and small grains, and north east-
central fruit and vegetable crops

In addition to the above, many of the states have issued special material to
meet their particular situations. These materials are available at the state
farm labor offices or the Extension information offices at land grant colleges.

#

